Class _____

Book _____

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED AT THE INTERMENT

OF

COL. THOMAS WATERMAN,

WHO DIED SUDDENLY, AT LEBANON, N. H.

February 20, 1838....Aged 71 years.

BY

REV. PHINEHAS COOKE.

Pastor of the Congregational Church in said town.

PRINTED AT THE REQUEST, AND FOR THE SPECIAL BENEFIT OF THE AFFLICTED FAMILY.

E. MANN, PRINTER.

Rev. Thomas Cooke was a native of Hadley, Mass. born in 1781, educated at Williams College, graduated in 1803, settled as the minister of Acworth, N.H. 7 Sept. 1811, dismissed 18 Feb. 1829, installed over a new Congregational Church in Lebanon, N.H. 13th May, 1829. Dismissed in 1845, removed to Amherst Mass. in May of that year, and died

☞ This discourse appears in its present form, to gratify the earnest desires of the bereaved relatives.—The writer is fully conscious, that the interest taken in it when delivered, was owing to *circumstances*, not to any intrinsic merit. Nothing, but the hope that it may prove beneficial to those for whom it was first preached, *now* printed, could induce its author to have it become more publick.

in North Amherst 28th Sept. 1853

aged 71

Funeral Sermon.

MATHEW XXIV. 42—"Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

When the Almighty speaks to the children of men in solemn, impressive language, like that suggested by the present occasion, it becomes his ministers to beware how they attempt to render his awful voice more emphatick.

There are certain providences, so striking, so admonitory to mankind, that they say to the astonished beholders—"Be still, and know that I am God."—Such was the affliction God imposed on his servant Job. His three friends sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him for they saw his grief was great.—There was sufficient in the exhibition of God's afflictive providence, to furnish materials for silent, solemn meditation, during a whole week. Such are many alarming providences at this day.

A fellow mortal, from apparent health, in a moment, drops into eternity. Sympathy, that most amiable of the relicks of the fall, causes those acquainted with the providence, to rush immediately into the circle of the afflicted family. When arrived, no one is disposed to break the silence. The mind is so absorbed in the awful scene, that for a while no one is disposed to speak, when God seems so near with his holy and righteous providence. Silence is the best interpreter of grief. Such are the feelings suggested by the pre-

sent occasion. It is with much fear and trembling, I break in upon the solemnity of this impressive scene. But here are weeping relatives to be consoled, neighbors and friends to be warned to be ready for their own great and last change, and the community around, to be entreated to prepare to meet their God. Jesus, though deeply afflicted at the death of Lazarus, did not let it pass without making the event instructive and profitable, by communicating divine truth. A feeble attempt to make the present occasion profitable to the living, is the only inducement I have in the present remarks.

In doing which I shall

Shew that God has, in his holy word, apprized the children of men that death may overtake them suddenly;

That this solemn declaration has been confirmed by his providence;

Then present some considerations suggested by the subject.

I. God has, in his holy word, apprized the children of men that they *must* not only die, but *may* die suddenly.

This is implied in the sentence passed upon the first sinful pair—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Leaving the time of their dissolution indefinite, was sufficiently admonitory to prompt them to be always ready, for they knew not the moment, the hour or the day when the son of man would call for them. But God has given many express declarations to this point. "The voice said unto me cry. And I said what shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the spirit of the

Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass." "For man also knoweth not his time; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in a snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them." "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." "Go to now ye that say, to-day, or to-morrow, we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell and get gain, whereas ye know not not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even as a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away. For ye ought to say if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." To these we subjoin the solemn caution of the text: "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Many declarations of like import might be cited to prove that, after the fall, God intended that man should be made sensible that his breath was in his nostrils, and that it might be taken away any moment when the Giver of life pleased.

II. The providences of God in all ages, have corroborated the truth, that men may die suddenly. This was true of the companion of the prophet Ezekiel.—"And the word of the Lord came unto me saying, son of man, Behold I take away the desire of thine eyes with a stroke." "So I spake to the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died." The pious Shunamite was called to part with her son in an unexpected hour. "And when the child was grown, it fell on a day that he went out to his father to the reapers. And he said, my head, my head. And he said carry him to his mother. And when he was

brought to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon and he died." Well in the morning, dead at noon. In a most impressive manner was God's word confirmed by his providence in the death of Job's children. The awful tidings came to his ears, "that his sons and daughters were eating, and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, and behold there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house and it fell upon the young men and they are dead, and I only have escaped alone to tell thee." Annanias and his wife died instantly by the judgment of God. The manner people are removed does not always indicate the future purposes of God concerning them. Both his children and enemies have suddenly departed this life. Some eminent saints have passed instantly from time to eternity. So died Moses. After performing all the work the Lord gave him to do, he went at God's bidding to the top of the mount, and there died. So died Eli. When the sad tale came to his ears that the ark of the Lord was taken, and removed into the hands of the enemies of the God of Israel, he fell from off his seat backward, and his neck brake and he died." Some godly ministers have died in their pulpits, while instructing their fellow men the way to eternal life. Their spirits have arisen from the lower to the upper temple; and, while alluring their hearers to "brighter worlds," have literally "led the way." Had I died while writing this sermon; should I drop during its delivery; or should any one of this audience die before these exercises close, it would be a no more surprising event than has often taken place before. Among the deaths which have occurred in this town during the two last years, ten have been sud-

den, supposed to be caused by apoplexy. This is one fourth of the whole number. Does not this plainly demonstrate, that man knoweth not the hour when his Lord cometh? It is supposed by some that the number of sudden deaths in the community has increased of late, even allowing for the increased population.—May it not be in consequence of the disregard paid by heedless mortals to the call of the Gospel? God, Almighty, will be heard by those in the enjoyment of such privileges as we possess. If men will not be entreated by the mild persuasives of the Gospel to consider their latter end, they must be admonished by the awful dispensations of his holy providence. "God hath spoken once, yea twice, but man perceiveth it not." A community, a church, or family, may have so disregarded the merciful invitations of the Almighty; so turned a deaf ear to the sweet sounds of gospel grace, as to lay the all-wise Governor under a holy necessity to make a new and terrifick exhibition of himself in view of such regardless mortals. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the spirit saith," what the gospel saith, and then he will be spared the providential alarm.

The subject suggests the following considerations:

1 If God has apprized man in his holy word, and confirmed it by his providence, that he may be called away by sudden death, then we see the daring presumption of laying out plans for business, which will take considerable time to accomplish. Many cautions are given in the divine word against such impiety. Whoever does this, without the proviso, "if the Lord will," casts contempt on the Divine government. He calculates on time which is the Lord's—on health, which is

at the Lord's disposal—on prosperity, which depends entirely on the Lord's blessing. He trespasses on God's dominion, tempts his indignation, insults his prerogative; and nothing less than a miracle of mercy will preserve him from sudden destruction, in his mad career. Such cases of sad reverse are constantly occuring. Man appoints, God disappoints—man contrives, God defeats—man says to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry"—God says, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee, then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

2. Such is our liability to sudden death, we see the wisdom of being in constant preparation. "Watch therefore, for ye know not the hour your Lord doth come." The whole tenour of scripture, and the dealings of providence, shew most clearly, the awful hazard of procrastinating the duties of religion. The man who neglects due preparation for the future world, treats the concerns of eternity as he would not those of time. "But know this, (says our Lord,) that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore, be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh."—The salvation of the soul should be secured as the first, the most important business of life. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you." Our liability to sudden dissolution, shews the presumption of depending on the time of sickness for the work of preparation. Multitudes have been disappointed in such expectations.

The last sickness comes. It is too severe to allow the sufferer to collect his thoughts on the indispensable duties of repentance, faith, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Or a delirium seizes the brain, and the distressed mortal becomes a maniac, and thus departs the present life. Or there was no *last* sickness. A paralytic shock—and, the man is no more. To avoid these dreadful alternatives, regard, O ye living, ye rational beings, what God says in his holy word. "Hear ye, and give ear, and be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord, your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness."

3. As men are liable to die at any moment, we should so live as not to be surprized at the sudden departure of our friends.

It is one of the blessings confered on the good man, that with equanimity he is enabled to meet the vicissitudes of life. "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established, he shall not be afraid." When death, at an unexpected hour, enters a family, and prostrates one of its members, great consternation often ensues, and all are as much overwhelmed as though no event of the kind had ever before occured. In this unexpected stroke, God has done nothing different from what he told mankind they might expect. No doubt the affliction is great, and it ought in a suitable manner to be regarded by survivors. If we possessed that holy trust in God, which the religion of the gospel enjoins, we should be calm under the heaviest calamity; and

be ready to say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." Suppose a family ardently pious, walking together in christian love, all fellow heirs of the grace of life. While in this happy condition, one is suddenly called away by death—what should be the conduct of the survivors? All should say, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." "There is a great void in the family circle;" true, but the family in heaven has received a new member. The departed saint has only been translated from Christ's household on earth, to his redeemed in heaven. And it is a truth not duly considered, that the sum of happiness in this family, including the departed member, is augmented. The member in glory enjoys so much more than while here, as far to overbalance the loss felt by his departure. Not one of the weeping survivors could desire his return. All will watch and pray, and live and act, that they may, at any hour, go to dwell with him in the paradise above. Thus, as this holy family, one after another, takes his flight, the remaining members become more weaned from the world. At length, all are gathered into bliss. It is in this way that God enjoins every family to live; to be always ready to part with each other, and not be overtaken with surprize at whatever hour the son of man cometh.

4. As God's providence is in conformity with his word, cheerful submission should be yielded to his sovereign will. His afflictive dispensations are one branch of his wise and righteous government. Man, in his fallen state, cannot be governed without them. Such discipline is peculiarly needful for the Christian. What would have David, or Peter have been without

chastizement? What small attainments in holiness would the church have made, had not its Lord caused it occasionally to pass through the furnace?" Concerning his ancient people God said, "Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." The refiner of silver sits watching the melted mass, until he can see his own image in it; then it is considered sufficiently purified. Thus God keeps some of his children in the furnace of affliction, until they become so purified from the dross of sin, as to reflect his image in their hearts, and his holy religion in their lives. The apostle, addressing Christians, says, "Ye are not sons if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers." "Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." The Judge of all the earth will do right.—There is a favorable time for a Christian to die. It comes, when he has accomplished the object for which God brought him into the world. It arrives when he has made as much advance in grace, as God intended by his conversion; and when the affliction is best adapted to produce spiritual good in his surviving friends. Infinite wisdom adapts his government to the best good of all concerned. Is the providence dark? "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." And if thou "knowest not what he does now, thou shalt know hereafter." "All things work together for good to them that love God; to them that are called according to his purpose." Let the soul who

trusts in God say, in the most trying hour of bereavement, "Father, not my will, but thy will be done."

Such submission becomes *her* from whom God has, with a sudden stroke, taken the companion of her youth and life. In some respects, the providence is peculiarly afflictive; yet there are many consoling circumstances attending the event. Your husband was not taken until he had arrived at more than threescore and ten; nor until he had helped you train up a large family to manhood; not, I trust, until he had given you comfortable evidence of a preparation for death. At the appointed time, he is taken; not with the distress usually attending a lingering consumption, not with the gnawings of a malignant cancer; but by a *sudden call* from the Giver of life. Having passed forty-seven years in the domestick relation with him who now slumbers in death, you have much occasion to be thankful that the disruption of these tender ties was delayed so long. You will with holy resignation, adopt the language of Job—"The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

To the surviving children, this providence is admonitory and instructive. Your tried friend, your counsellor, your father, is no more. By his death, new and great responsibilities come upon you. To supply his place in his family, among the neighbours, as a citizen, will demand of you peculiar exertions. He so lived as to benefit the generation in which he mingled.*—

* Col Thomas Waterman was the son of Mr Silas and Mrs Silence Waterman His parents were among the first settlers of the town Our fathers had an energy of mind, corresponding with the hardihood of their bodies These elements were sufficiently developed, to shew what might have been expected, had they enjoyed the literary privileges of the present age. His birth is recorded July 4 1766 In 1798, he was chosen one of the Select men of the town, and served in that office, and as Representative in the State Legislature, during the following thirty years; more than any other person. No name, since the civil organization of the town, is so often found on its records, as Moderator,

Thus *you*, and all, ought to live, that the world might be made better by it. How many of the human race so "pass their sojourning here" as to be the mere incumbents of life. The epitaph written by Moses, for so many of the people before the flood, would serve as well for multitudes at the present day: "*They were born—they begat sons and daughters—they died.*" All else, if recorded, would not pay posterity for the perusal. In a world so full of sin, where the moral elements are in such confusion, needing all the energies in every lover of his country and of his species, to stay the disorder and rectify the wildness, he must indeed be a slothful servant, who will not lend a helping hand. May you possess the political honesty, patriotic benevolence, and useful life, of him whose departure you now deplore. In this way only, the void can be filled; and instead of the parents there will be the children, a generation arising to serve the Lord.

The citizens of this place claim a share in the loss sustained by the death of their fellow townsman. One of your fathers is gone, and has left behind him an example of attachment to the political interests of the town, worthy of your imitation. He began his days in that gloomy period which resulted in the foundation of this Republic. He witnessed the time that "tried men's souls." He died, when great responsibilities rest on every friend to his country, lest the liberties purchased with the best blood of the fathers, should be wrested from their children.

May we all act well our part, as men, as citizens,

Town Clerk, Representative, and Select-man, as that of Thomas Waterman — He was the first male child born in Lebanon; and to the day of his death, might be said to be the *walking history* of the town. He came down to us from another age, to shew the present generation, what political integrity, firm patriotism, and sterling worth, dwelt in our forefathers.

and as christians. And when we have served our generation faithfully, may we find a peaceful resting place among the sepulchres of our fathers.

Col Thomas Waterman was descended from Robert of Marshfield of the fifth generation, he married Susannah Cleveland of Canterbury Con: 23 Sept 1790. he died suddenly on the 20th of Feb 1838 in the 72d year of his age. She died ~~died~~ on the 28th Aug 1846 in the 81st year of her age. Their children were as follows, viz

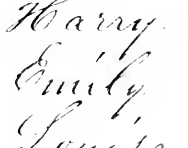
Thomas — the [illegible] of the Waterman pamphlets.

Mary

* Susan

* Harriet

Silas


Harry
Emily
Louisa

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